

JAMES F B LAMICK HOME

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INDIANA GENERAL

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# Indiana

James Lanier Home

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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*The* JAMES F. D. LANIER  
STATE MEMORIAL

MADISON, INDIANA



## WHY A MEMORIAL

Without doubt, the James F. D. Lanier State Memorial at Madison, is one of the most sumptuous homes ever erected in the state of Indiana.

This stately mansion not only is a memorial to an outstanding Hoosier patriot, but is a permanent example of a notable Indiana home of its period.

The story of this home—its construction and architecture—its subsequent restoration as a memorial—and the history of the man thus memorialized—are of interest to historian and layman alike.

The home became a memorial in 1925 when the Indiana General Assembly of that year formally accepted it by law and appropriated a sum of \$12,500 for restoration and maintenance of the property.

*The*

JAMES F. D. LANIER  
STATE MEMORIAL

MADISON, INDIANA



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
DIVISION OF STATE PARKS, LANDS AND WATERS

Price 25 Cents

5TH REVISION, 20M, JUNE, 1949





## *The* JAMES F. D. LANIER State Memorial

The mansion of James Franklin Doughty Lanier was erected on the banks of the Ohio river at Madison between the years 1840 and 1844. Through the years it has gained renown as one of the most imposing and palatial homes in Indiana. Why such a home should have been built just 28 years after the state was admitted to the Union will doubtless forever puzzle visitors. The answer may be found, however, in the history of the man who built and owned the home and in the history of Francis Costigan, the architect-builder who created it.

Lanier's home is an example of the "Greek Revival" style of architecture, which had great influence in the building art prior to 1860. The front of the home with its two story portico, faces the Ohio river and is quite suggestive of Southern mansions. Use of the Corinthian (or Greek) order was rare in Indiana because it was more difficult to execute than the commonly used Doric.

Blending well with the Corinthian order is the Tuscan order of architecture, followed in the tall engaged pilasters that flank the sides of the house—and in the smaller engaged pilasters that frame the front entrance and windows. Octagonal windows are placed in the frieze of the entablature to illuminate rooms on the third floor. The octagonal design is used again in the low cupola at the top of the stair well.

Wrought iron work, evident so frequently in New Orleans and, at that time, so common in Madison, is used in the portico of the Lanier home and was designed to harmonize with the motifs above the windows. Although the mantels, doors and window frames are rather simple, the cornices in various rooms of the home are heavily ornamented in Greek design.

Possibly the most incomprehensible feature of the home is that all of the work was done by hand. There were no machines to aid workmen in construction. Moreover, there were no unions at that time, merely groups similar to old world guilds. Workers in various trades would join together, forming distinct groups such as wood workers, stone masons and so on. When individuals wanted to build a home, they would announce it publicly stipulating the type of home they wanted and of what materials they wished it built. Then, workers in those fields would respond to the call and go to work. Bricks usually were manufactured on the premises or conveniently nearby; timber was felled in the neighborhood and all work was done by hand.

## JAMES FRANKLIN DOUGHTY LANIER



J. F. D. Lanier has often been referred to as "the greatest financier in the history of Indiana and one of our leading patriots."

Born in 1800 at Washington, Beaufort county, North Carolina, the youthful Lanier journeyed to Madison, Indiana, in 1817 with his parents.

He represented a pioneer type who brought to Indiana the best possible character and attributes. He was a straightforward, energetic and thrifty young man and his ability as

a financier was unexcelled. The following excerpt from a story appearing in the January (1949) issue of *THE HOOSIER BANKER* paints an accurate and interesting picture of Mr. Lanier:

"Mr. Lanier was a lawyer and clerk of the Indiana House of Representatives. He saved enough to invest in real estate that increased rapidly in value and gave him a financial start. He was able to buy the largest block of stock of the new State Bank of Indiana when it was organized in 1833, and became the manager of the Central Bank at Indianapolis and president of the Madison branch, too.

"Mr. Lanier was a smart banker. At that time the only outlet of this wilderness was the Ohio river, and all goods moved to New Orleans. So the bank purchased bills drawn against shippers of produce to this port. As these bills matured Mr. Lanier would go to New Orleans and invest their proceeds in the purchase of bills drawn in New Orleans on shipments from there to eastern cities. The proceeds of these latter bills supplied the bank with exchange for western merchants when they purchased goods. Thus the bank turned its capital several times a year.

"The bank was prosperous from the start, but it had its problems, too. There was a panic in 1837 and all the eastern banks, including the old United States Bank, suspended specie payment. The Indiana banks had one and a half million dollars of U. S. government funds on deposit, but Mr. Lanier convinced the Secretary of the Treasury of the soundness of the Indiana Bank and it was agreed to withdraw the funds only in the regular course of business. . . . It was the only bank in the west that did not fail.

"It had paid dividends of 12 per cent to 14 percent every year of its operation and the state made a profit of two and one-half million dollars that was used to establish our school fund."

But Mr. Lanier's prowess as a banker was far outshadowed by his unselfish loyalty as an American patriot. Upon two occasions, the Hoosier bank executive placed his personal fortune at the disposal of the State of Indiana with little assurance that he would ever be repaid.

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The name Lanier is a common one in American history, having appeared in known records as early as 1676. A few years from that date the family trees of the Washingtons and the Laniers were joined through the marriages of Sampson and Robert, sons of an immigrant, John Lanier, to Elizabeth and Priscilla, daughters of Richard Washington. Richard Washington's father was John Washington of Surrey county, Virginia—a cousin of John Washington of Westmoreland county, Virginia, the great grandfather of General George Washington, father of our country.

So, while the relationship was distant, J. F. D. Lanier was related to the first president of the United States. For that reason, a lock of President Washington's hair is framed in a shadow box which hangs in the lower hall of the Lanier home.

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The early life of Mr. Lanier was that of a typical western pioneer. He acquired his first training in business as a clerk in a country store at Eaton, Ohio, where he learned to be "industrious, active and methodical," as he himself said.

His elementary schooling was such as his crude surroundings could afford, but early in 1819 he began the study of law and completed a legal course at Transylvania Law School, Lexington, Kentucky. He set up a law practice at Madison at the age of 23 and the same year he was appointed assistant clerk in the Indiana House of Representatives, then meeting at Corydon. The following year he helped to move the capitol from Corydon to Indianapolis and later became Clerk of the House.

As president of the Madison Bank and a member of its board of control until 1842, Mr. Lanier established quite a reputation as a financier. However, following the acquisition of California, the discovery of gold and the general national expansion, Lanier manifested a great interest in railroad construction. At that time railroad development, while in its infancy, was moving forward by leaps and bounds, and Lanier was instrumental in refinancing numerous



railroads that had suffered during the years of depression. He left Madison in 1851 to make his home in New York City, where he joined his son-in-law, Richard H. Winslow, in the financial firm of Winslow, Lanier & Company.

In 1860, the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency brought mutterings of a coming storm. Too old to join the army, Mr. Lanier gave aid and encouragement to the Union cause.

When war came upon the country, Indiana was almost entirely without means. Two factions in Indiana divided state sentiment between the North and South. Indiana's first quota called for by President Lincoln was for six regiments. It was out of this situation that Mr. Lanier endeared himself to the people of Indiana for all times!

To raise a quota of six regiments was a simple matter for the Hoosier state—but to arm and equip them was another thing. The state was struggling under the burden of an enormous debt by reason of which she narrowly had escaped the dishonor of repudiation; her treasury was empty—she had no arms or munitions or organized militia and, besides this, no credit upon which to borrow.

It was then that Lanier came forward with the offer of a loan. At that time the sum of \$420,000 was advanced by Mr. Lanier to the State of Indiana, without stipulations as to interest or the time when it should be paid—and only upon the strength of a note signed by the Governor, Oliver P. Morton.

The Madison Daily Courier of April 26, 1861, carried a news item which fully tells the story. It was dated within eight days after the attack on Fort Sumpter. It said:

“Banking Office of Winslow, Lanier & Co.  
52 Wall Street, N. Y., April 20, 1861.

His Excellency Oliver P. Morton,  
Governor of Indiana,  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Sir:

Should your state need more money to arm and equip your quota of volunteers for the defense of our country, now so wantonly assailed, you can rely on my advancing her any sum not exceeding \$25,000.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant.

*J. F. D. LANIER.”*

Needless to say, Governor Morton accepted Mr. Lanier's generous offer.

Some time later Mr. Lanier twice loaned the state sufficient funds to pay the interest on the state debt. Altogether, the money provided by Mr. Lanier during and after the war, exceeded a million dollars. In following years, it was all returned.

The most important factor in connection with both of these loans is that they were not ordinary, prudent business ventures, but were made in the face of imminent risk. The following sketch from Lanier's autobiography tells the story in Lanier's own words:

"The application was made at the darkest period of the whole war. I could have no security whatever, and could rely for reimbursement only on the good faith of a legislature to be chosen at a future and distant day, and upon the chances of its being made of more upright and patriotic members than those composing the one then in existence. If the great contest should turn out disastrously to the cause of the Union and of freedom, I could never expect to be repaid a dollar. I felt, however, that on no account must the debt of a great state be discredited, nor the position of its chief magistrate, the ablest and most efficient of all the loyal governors, be compromised or weakened. No alternative was left me but to advance the sum required. \* \* \* If the credit of the state in such a critical period should be destroyed, that of other states, and even the Federal government, might be so impaired as to render it impossible for them to sustain the immense burdens of the war."

\* \* \* \* \*

After the war, the President sent Mr. Lanier to Europe. His frequent contacts with the Nation's Capitol found him qualified to re-establish American credit abroad and his tour was highly successful.

He was able to enjoy his new home at Madison only a few years before he went to New York to live. His first wife and one of his eight children, died while they lived in the home, and following the death of his wife, home cares fell upon the eldest daughter, Margaret. When Mr. Lanier left for New York, his eldest son, Alexander, accepted the responsibility of the home, being liberally aided by an annual bequest which enabled him to maintain it until his death.

There are no known records of the construction expense of the Lanier home. However, based upon the cost of the Shrewsbury home, another early Madison residence, the original cost may be safely estimated in the neighborhood of \$40,000 to \$50,000.

During the lifetime of Alexander, the home became a social

center in Madison. He was a skillful horticulturist and his exhibits frequently took grand prizes in New York shows.

Today, the Lanier home stands as a memorial to a great citizen and to the ante-bellum days of the state. Unlike many other historic homes, the Lanier home is not a museum. It is as alive today as it was when the Laniers occupied it more than 100 years ago. Visitors to the home today have often remarked that it seems as though the original residents are only temporarily absent, and at any moment the massive front door might open and admit them once again.

From its site on the terrace, the house looks down upon a great expanse of velvety grass, half the size of a city block, rimmed by an embossed border of shrubs and flowers. Its privacy is enhanced by a living wall of green trees, making a vista of the broad Ohio river and the purple Kentucky hills just beyond.

This, in part, is the story of J. F. D. Lanier, his relation to Indiana, and a few of the incidents in his life for which he is honored by the memorial. A complete biography will show that the Nation, as well as the Hoosier State, owes him a debt of gratitude and appreciation for patriotic services rendered. He died in New York City, August 29, 1881, and is buried in Greenwood cemetery there.

\* \* \* \* \*



*Alexander Lanier*



## FRANCIS COSTIGAN, ARCHITECT

Francis Costigan, a combination carpenter and architect, was one of the earliest of such useful craftsmen to appear in the Ohio valley. He designed and executed the J. F. D. Lanier home. A Midwestern Greek Revival mansion, the Lanier home is considered Costigan's masterpiece. His name is embedded in the newel post of the home.

It was begun in 1840 and completed within four years. It is believed that Costigan "copied his house designs from books of ready-made plans," and then executed them.

He probably was familiar with the work of James Stuart and Nicholas Revett. Asher Benjamin's, "Rudiments of Architecture," possibly was in his hands as a textbook.

Costigan was an artist, an architect, a builder and a dreamer. Very little personal information about him has been left. He was born in Washington, D. C., on March 4, 1810. He married Elizabeth Taylor and they had three children, Francis, Sarah and Theodore.

The Baltimore (Md.) directory of 1835 lists Mr. Costigan as a carpenter and builder with a shop on Frederick street.

He began his craftsmanship as an apprentice carpenter and after mastering that trade, finished a course in architecture. Later he became a skilled draftsman. Costigan was an eastern man who spent his last twenty years of life in Indiana. He left some excellent specimens of his work in Indianapolis as well as in Madison.

Our first glimpse of the architect-builder was in 1835 when he came west to locate in Madison, then a prosperous Ohio river town, and the inland port of New Orleans. While Costigan was attracted by the west, James F. D. Lanier was equally impressed with eastern culture and it probably was this factor that brought the two together.

While in Madison, Costigan also built the fine old Shrewsbury home, which was completed in 1848 at a cost of \$50,000. It was constructed for Captain Charles Shrewsbury, and is standing today. Another building he designed was the Madison Hotel, which at that time was reputed to have been the finest inn of its kind along the Ohio. It, however, is no longer standing.

In all of the architect's buildings there are certain features which mark it plainly Costigan. Because he was able to exert the entire expression of his style in the Lanier home, it remains the outstanding example of his distinctive creations.

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## *The* LOWER HALL

A massive doorway, opening from a street on the north, leads into a hall befitting the stately proportions of the Lanier home. Hall lanterns, hanging from the hand moulded ceiling, are of an original design, patterned after the candle lamps that once hung there. All of the plaster work is hand-designed, employing the ancient egg and dart moulding used so frequently in Greek architecture.

A graceful, spiral stairway winds upward through a rounded well to a glassed-in cupola above the third floor. The stairway is one of the outstanding features of the hall. On the newel posts that terminate the winding hand rails are two silver plates, on which are inscribed, "F. Costigan, architect and builder, 1844." The following quotation by Costigan aptly describes his feelings toward the Lanier home: "Architecture, like statuary, is a mute language that conveys unalterable impulses of thought to other minds, present and to come."

In the center of the west wall hangs a large oil portrait of the owner, Mr. James F. D. Lanier, as he appeared at the age of forty. This painting is a copy of an original, now in possession of the family, and was made by Leslie Emmet at the request of Charles Lanier and presented to the memorial to be hung in the house.

Beneath the picture is a marble-top pier table, often called a console, or "petti-coat" table. This rare, old piece of mahogany furniture dates back to 1820 and was used by the young ladies to ascertain whether or not their petti-coats were properly showing. The vertical mirror at the base of the table told this tale, however, today it merely reveals ladies' ankles and the hems of "new-look" skirts. The table was a gift of Mrs. Miles Standish (the late Miles Standish was a sixth generation descendent of the famous Colonial Captain Miles Standish).

Two fine old-fashioned candlesticks with hurricane glasses are, perhaps, the oldest original pieces in the house. They were placed over candles to protect them from drafts. A tall grandfather clock standing in the hall was brought from England by Mr. Lanier and has been keeping perfect time for more than a century. A pair of upholstered Empire sofas, rare examples of horse hair cloth covering, are in the hall. One of them belonged to Moody Park, the first mayor of Madison.

Several original examples of early American steel engravings may be found in the hall. They include several fine reproductions







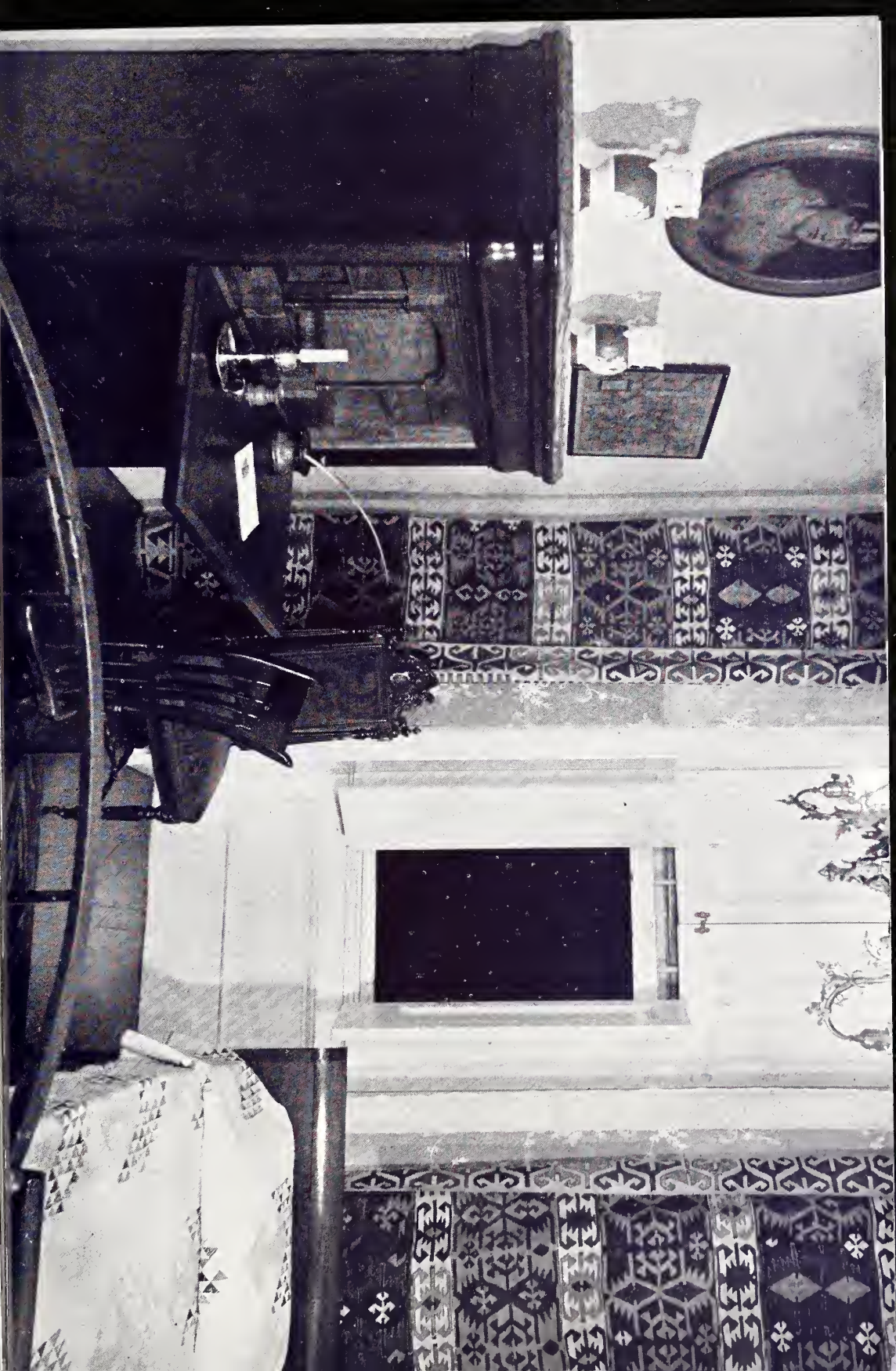
from cartoons of Raphael's work now in the Sistine Chapel. These, like many of the more modern themes selected for engraving, are illustrations of the courtly and sedate decorations of a Victorian home. Of note, too, are engravings of George Caleb Bingham's paintings.

A quaint old cast iron hatrack attracts attention in the hall, and possibly reminds one of the master's frequent trips to New Orleans. It is a splendid example of the excellent foundry work done in the southern city. Such pieces often found their way up the rivers into inland towns and those familiar with the art of wrought iron are inspired by the craftsmanship it displays.

The shadow-box frame, hanging at the south end of the hall, contains a lock of George Washington's hair, duly authenticated by William Lanier Washington. Above the prized relic is a copy of a painting of Mary Ball Washington, the mother of the first president.

Before entering either of the east rooms on the first floor, one sees an interesting architectural feature in the curved door that leads from the hall into a passageway between the two rooms. When one realizes how difficult it is to fit a straight edge casing a swinging door, it is astonishing to find a door curved sufficiently and correctly to fit into an equally curved casing. Yet this, and two others in the home, have been in constant use for more than 100 years and still are in perfect condition.

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## *The* PARLORS

Two rooms on the west side of the first floor of the house are double parlors. They may be used separately or can be thrown into one by shifting a pair of sliding doors. They were also called drawing rooms during the Victorian era. Very often one of the double parlors was used as a music room, as was the case in the Lanier home.

The walls are painted, instead of papered, making the rooms cool and inviting. The Ionic columns, forming a division between the two rooms and at the same time tying them together, are typically Costigan, yet were often found in houses built in this era.

Both rooms are furnished as one, harmonizing throughout, yet if separated each would be a complete, well balanced unit. The two sofas, and chairs are of the Empire period, and of a style well known to collectors of antiques. These articles were imported from France by Mr. Lanier for his New York home, but eventually reached Madison as contributions from the immediate family. The combined bookcase and secretary in the south parlor is the work of a very early local cabinet maker and is an original Lanier piece. The handsome center tables in both rooms are of fine mahogany. The card table, perhaps the oldest table in the house, is a very choice piece, and there is a special charm in the tilt-table elaborately inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

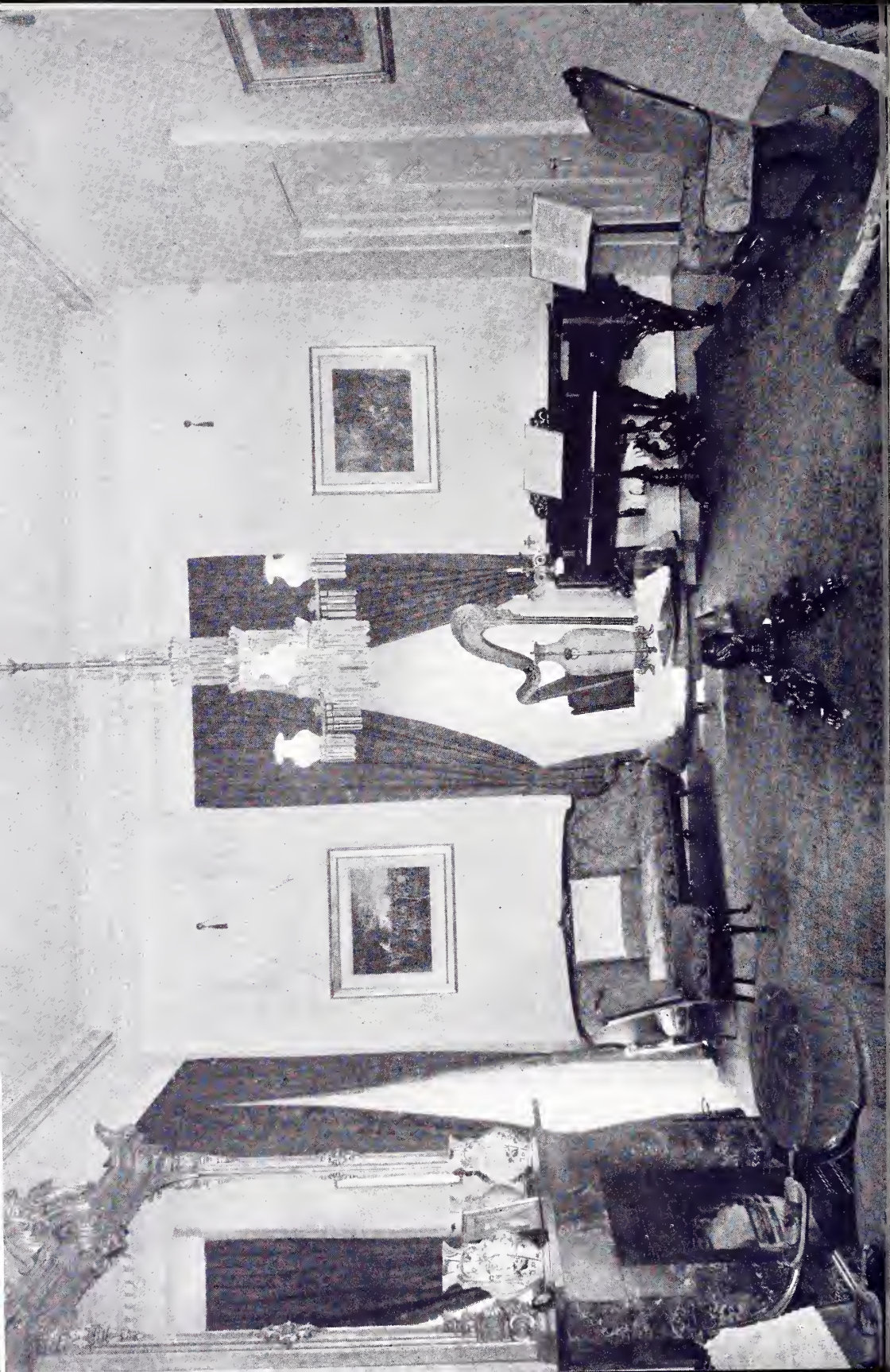
A pair of imported Austrian cut crystal chandeliers, although not directly associated with the Lanier family, has an interesting history. They were originally imported in the early forties for the No. 2 Engine House (Fire company) of Madison, which stood on Third street across from the post office. In those early days, the seldom remembered volunteer fire company engine house was likewise a social rendezvous. Often an engine house was a handsomely appointed club, as the two costly chandeliers would indicate. Two large mirrors in ornamental frames of gilt surmounting the Egyptian marble mantels were presented to the memorial by Mrs. Adelaide Fairbanks Causy. Adding to their imposing effect, are two superb old Dresden vases on the mantels. On the north mantel is a picture of Alexander Lanier, previously mentioned as the eldest son, who occupied the house during his entire lifetime, and who died there in 1895.

Two statues made of Carrara marble quickly catch the visitor's eye. Both of these pieces are portrait statues of Mary Lanier Stone and were made in Italy in 1854. Mary Lanier was considered a very









beautiful girl at 17, and while in Italy with her brother, Alexander, posed for these two pieces. There is exquisite workmanship on both statues. One is a bust, and the other a character study, "Rebecca at the Well." They are, of course, original Lanier possessions.

The harp was sent to the memorial by James Lanier, a grandson, while the piano is a Cycloid Grand, manufactured by Lindeman & Sons, New York, in 1850, or thereabout, and is a typical specimen of the period. The two large Kerma rugs were once family possessions and are said to have cost a small fortune. A miniature on the mantel which may attract the more observant eye is that of Margaret Lanier Winslow.

The pictures on these walls and elsewhere throughout the house may be spoken of collectively. Most of them are early American engravings quite representative of the movement in art during the forties.

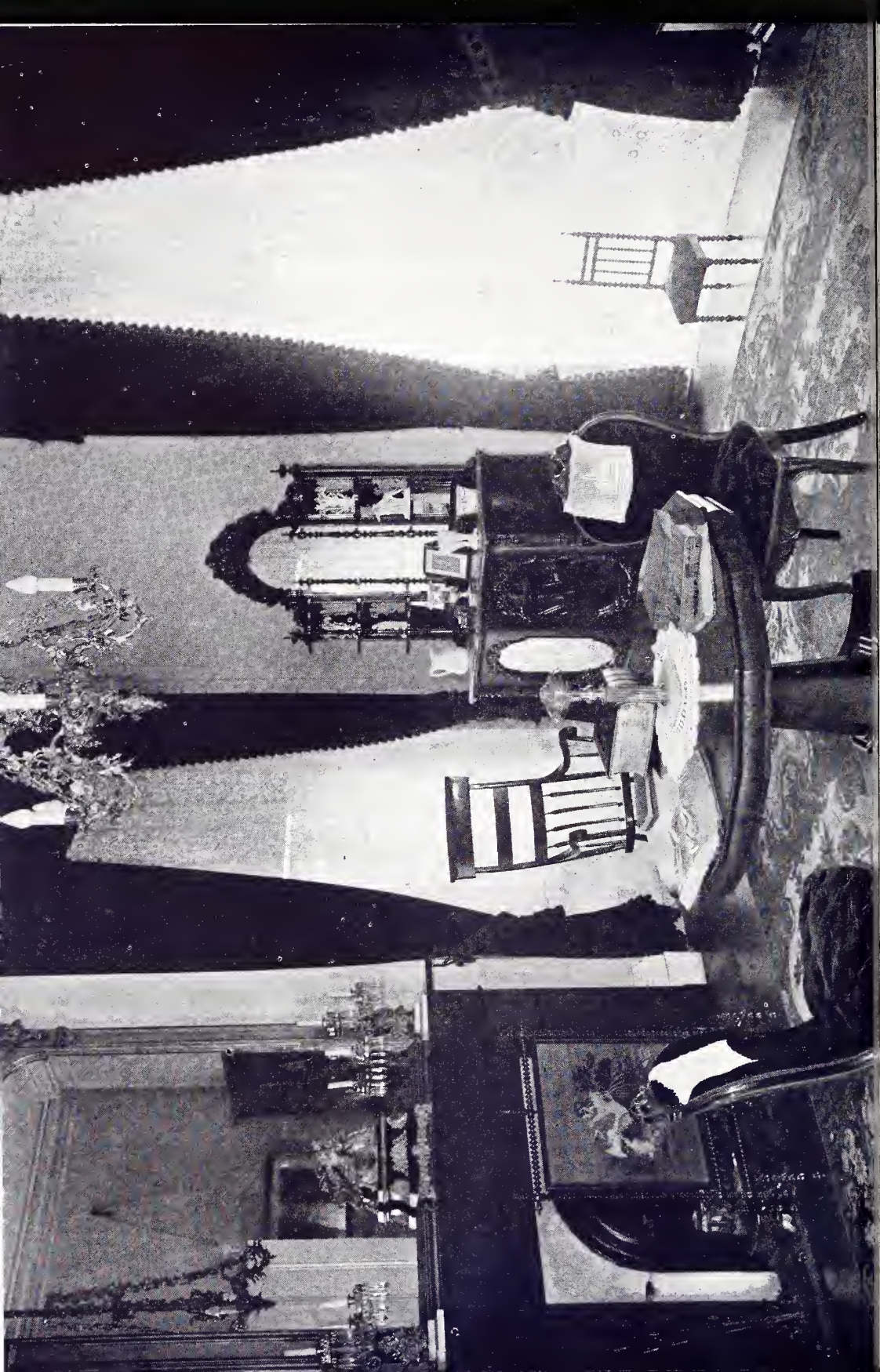
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## *The* FAMILY ROOM

Across the hall to the southeast, is the sitting room, where the family gathered in the evening. Many of the furnishings there were once in the possession of the elder Lanier, and have since been placed in the memorial by his children or grandchildren. The great rosewood bookcase, standing against the south wall, dates back into the forties. It is a French piece that was imported when the house was built and has always been there. The greatly admired ormolu chandelier was originally a gas fixture. From almost the earliest days in Madison, artificial gas was available. The chandelier itself is a French importation and was first hung in its present position. The fine old mahogany secretary is distinctly American in design. Above it is a portrait of Charles Lanier, the youngest son of James F. D. Lanier, painted by John Alexander. It was presented to the memorial by Mr. Lanier's daughter, Mrs. George Tunure. The color scheme of this room is particularly rich and attractive, with the windows draped in crimson Flemish fabric to match the material used in the upholstery. The armed rocking chair, the cathedral chair, the red plush sofa, once the property of Charles Lanier, are all original Lanier family pieces. On the west wall is a large oil portrait of John James Lanier at the age of six, two years before he was drowned in the Ohio river. The portrait was given to the memorial by Mrs. Miles Standish.

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## *The* DINING ROOM

To many visitors, the dining room is the most charming of all rooms on the lower floor. Furnished in old English mahogany, the Sheraton table and chairs, with serving tables, china closets and sideboard, are in splendid taste. The twin dining tables combined into one, with the imported chairs, are a perfect representation of the Victorian age. The three branched candelabra were once the property of Governor Bullock of Kentucky, while the silver tray with the English coffee service came from the William English (Indianapolis) family. Another silver piece is a caster holding liquor decanters. The silver water pitcher was presented to John R. Cravens by the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad officials at the time of his resignation as vice-president of the company. The painted tray and waiter were brought from Holland in 1850. One is attracted by the magnificent crystal chandelier and the beautiful candelabra in this room, the former being an elaborate assemblage of hundreds of finely cut crystals.

Outstanding attractions of the Lanier home and especially of the dining room are the Audubon prints. These pictures were the gift of Charles Cravens. They are all originals. The "Canada Jay" in color is considered the best of the collection. Others are "The Great American Shrike," and "The Black Billed Cuckoo," which dates back to 1826, and "The Loggerhead Shrike," printed in London in 1829. Two more prints, "Pine Martens" and "Armadillo" are by J. W. Audubon, a son of the naturalist.

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## *The* PASSAGE WAY

Between the "family room" and the dining room is a small hall or passageway. Originally this was a landing for the "dumbwaiter" from the kitchen in the basement, but after the wing was added to the house, kitchen and pantry were brought to the ground floor. In this passageway hangs an engraving of the house and grounds as they were during the lifetime of Alexander Lanier. The picture was made for the Baskin and Forester atlas of Indiana, issued in 1876. There is also found a genealogical table of the Lanier family and an old painting of James F. D. Lanier's home in Lenox, Mass.

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## YESTERDAY *and* TODAY

In refurnishing the Lanier Mansion, the attempt was not to restore exactly the original articles and setting, but to duplicate historically what might be considered a typical gentleman's house of the early eighties, representing the best taste of the day. Fortunately, the taste that approved of the Greek architecture turned also in the main to simplicity and dignity in the furniture, guided by such real apostles of beauty as Hepplewhite, Sheraton and their kind. Not alone in the furnishing but in the mode of resetting is accuracy observed.

Between the elegancies of the pre-war period (before the Civil War), and those of the present, a certain distinction should be noted. The ideally appointed opulent home of today speaks of easy familiarity and influence. Articles of beauty and of cultural value, bric-a-brac, pictures, books, etc., lie hither and yon with the grace of negligence, and the atmosphere created is that the possessor, out of an abiding joy in these things, lives with them intimately day by day. It was not quite so 100 years ago—at least not in the American mid-west. Wealth was not a thing handed down by one's forefathers along with an education in culture, but something built up by its possessor, and along with the acquiring of the grace went more or less self-consciousness. Nowhere does this appear more than in the ideal home which imposed upon the housewife a sort of awe of her own best furniture. Every chair and table must be placed just so, every article must rest in its appointed place. The parlor and its contents were so sacred that often, when not in social use, they were darkened from the sun's rays, and chairs and sofas were shrouded with special covers made for them. Hence, if to the visitor the setting of the Lanier home seems mathematically precise, it is purposely so.

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## *The* UPPER HALL, ALCOVES and SECOND FLOOR

The most conspicuous feature in the furnishing of the upper hall is a magnificent wardrobe of crotch mahogany, an old French armoire. Inside is a small chest of drawers of curly maple. No doubt this antique reached the Lanier home by way of New Orleans. Windsor chairs and several engravings complete the simple setting of the hall.

At the north end of the upper hall and over the north entrance is a private study used by Mr. Lanier. Among the articles found in this room are a desk and a day bed, both original possessions of James F. D. Lanier. The quaint oval portrait over the desk is of Mrs. Lanier, who occupied the house for only a brief period. It was painted by T. Buchanan Reed, who was both a poet and a painter. The whatnot in the corner, a holder for bric-a-brac and a much-sought-after antique, was at one time a popular piece of furniture.

The four bed chambers on the second floor are furnished and papered, each in its own scheme of color, tone and fitness. Some of the wall papers, of old time patterns, were imported from England and Alsace-Lorraine.

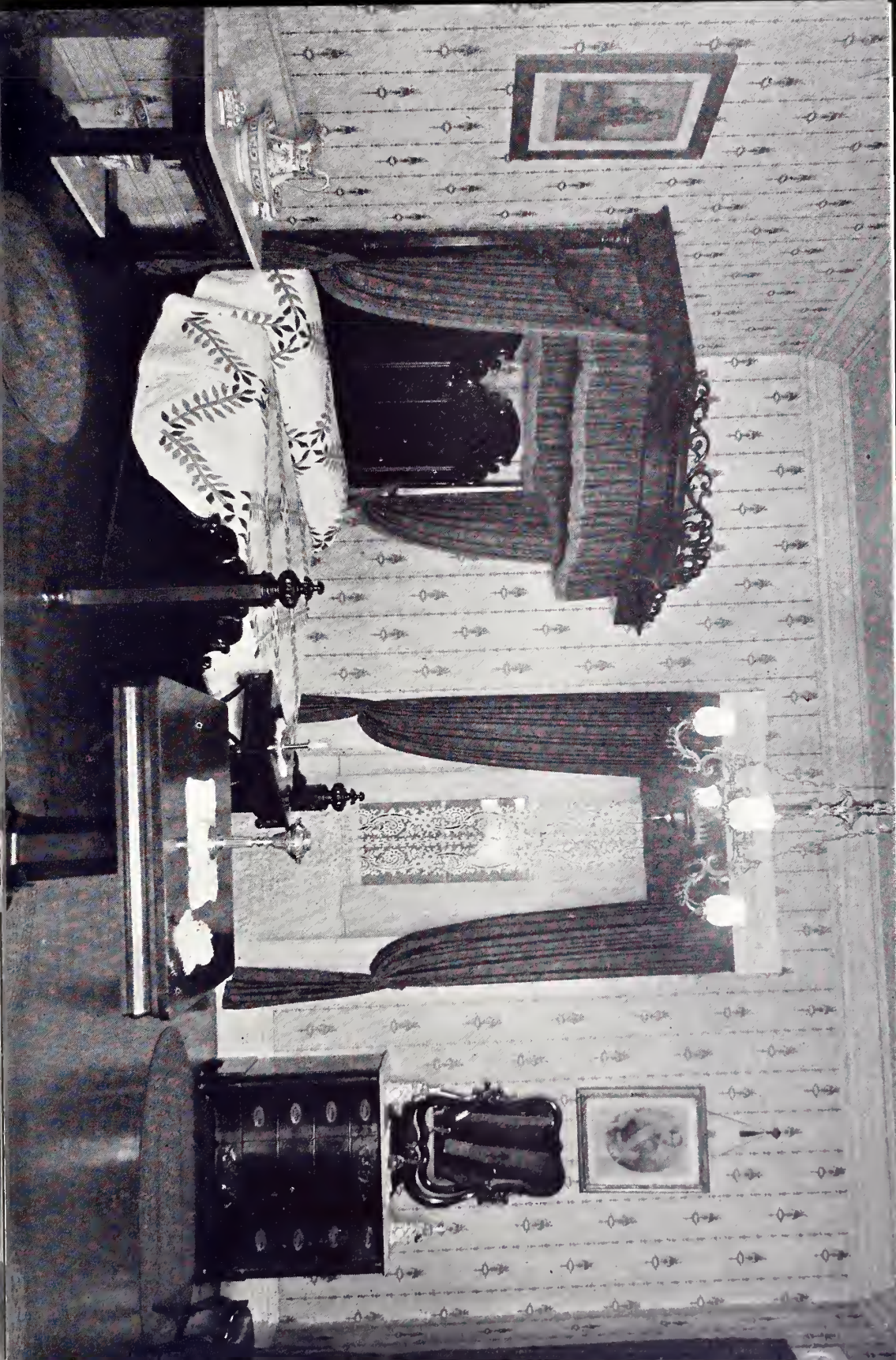
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## *The* SOUTHWEST CHAMBER

(The gold room)

One of the most pleasing of the upper floor rooms is this southwest one—commanding a fine view of the river—because of its golden-toned color scheme. The bed and window draperies of rich bronze, the large gilt-leaf French china vases on the mantel, the tall Yankee eight-day clock of mahogany and gold, the ormolu chandelier, the brass lamp and heavy brass candlestick all harmonize with the golden embellished wall covering. The furniture is of mahogany, much of it brought from New Orleans by Mr. Lanier. The most striking article in the room is the massive early Victorian canopied bedstead, full six feet in width and hung with heavy bronze fabric curtains. The bed is also an original Lanier piece. Against the south wall stands a marble-topped "block-front" bureau of exceptional design and on the opposite side of the room is a chest of drawers, the knobs of which are ingeniously inlaid with double stars, certifying the skill of the old-time cabinet maker. A small portable shaving cabinet, a graceful candlestand beside the bed, candle-





sticks of both brass and china, fiddle-back chairs, some upholstered in hair cloth and ornamented with white antimacassars, all Lanier original possessions, complete the furnishing of the room.

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## *The* NORTHWEST CHAMBER

(The Rose Room)

The northwest bedroom, with its draperies of gold and gray and walls covered with rose colored Alsatian paper of pink tone, is furnished in rosewood. The bedstead is of a four-poster design, its complementary pieces being a bureau, a wardrobe, a center table, a drop-leaf candle stand, a wash stand and oval mirror, a set of chairs upholstered in haircloth, and a cane rocker. The rare old quilt of charming coloring and design and applique border is an example of the patient needle-work by which pioneer mothers expressed their artistic impulses. The three-shelf corner bracket for ornaments is a modified form of the popular whatnot. A mirror with divided glass and broad mahogany frame, topping the white marble mantel, offers a poetic diversion when compared with the gilt frame and veined black marble of the adjoining room. Large mantel vases are early white blown glass; an ornamental perfume bottle, and a decorated wash stand set are of Dresden china. The braided rugs are worthy of note, particularly the huge center one, which is more than 30 feet in circumference, and the wind-shield candlestick in the room attracts attention because of its unusual design. A chandelier, companion to the one in the southwest room, is of French ormolu. Three pictures on the walls may be mentioned as illustrative of the mid-century taste. The first one is a colored print of American country life, and the other two are lithographic portraits of women.

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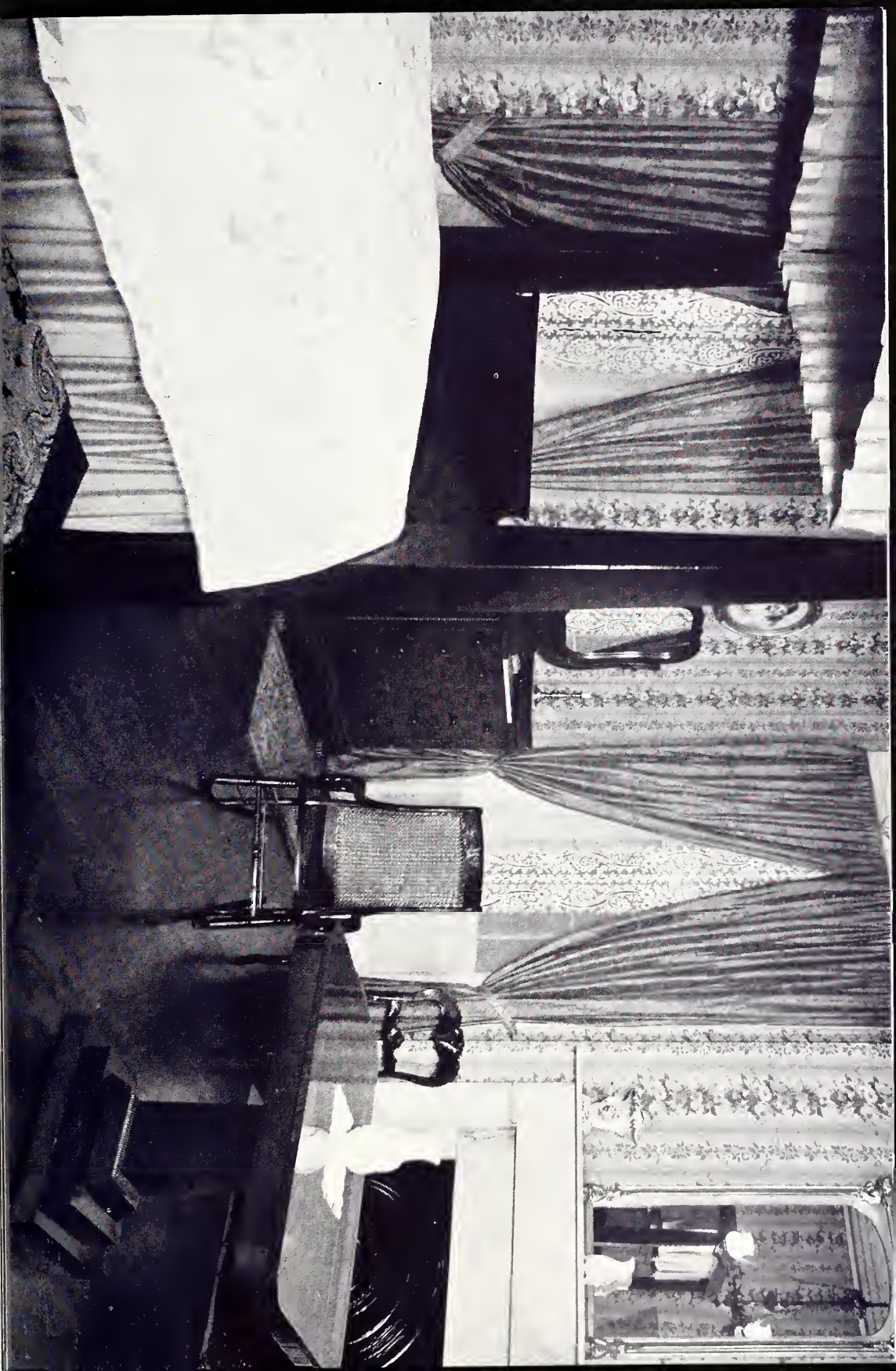




## *The* NORTHEAST CHAMBER

The northeast room is blue and gray in tone, with pink roses and blue morning glories on the wall against a gray ground. Most of the furniture is walnut. A poster bedstead with its blue silken curtains stands so high that a part of its equipment is a pair of steps for mounting to it, and a cotton bedspread is an outstanding specimen of pioneer art. The complementary pieces include the usual candle stand, small table, bureau, chest of drawers and washstand, the latter furnished with a decorated china bowl and old pitcher of Dresden. A novel feature of the chest of drawers is the drawer knobs which are inset with little circular mirrors. The lithograph over the washstand is of the home of Margarett Lanier Winslow at Westport, Connecticut.

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## *The* SOUTHEAST CHAMBER

This chamber, with its walls of deep rose and white, and draperies of magenta hue, is furnished for the most part in curly maple, its tall square-poster bed and the corresponding pieces offering a contrast to the rest of the house furnishings. A gilded chandelier with globes of iridescent glass, brass candlesticks and harmonizing hues in the floor rugs, all blend with the pale gold of the maple. One chest of drawers has both maple and cherry in its construction, the deep rich hue of the last named wood contrasting with the body of the piece. A somewhat curious example of the pioneer domestic art is the homespun bedspread heavily embossed with candlestick embroidery of interesting design. The child's trundle bed is a relic of bygone days when economy of floor space in a bedroom was sought.

Connecting with this room is a small boudoir similar in size to the alcove room at the opposite end of the upper hall. This charming little room was Mrs. Lanier's dressing room, containing its quaint dressing table, with mahogany framed mirror and splint bottom stool. A square perfume bottle with a flower design, a powder jar of Old English Staffordshire in the semblance of a little lady in crinoline, and various other feminine articles that speak of daintiness are in evidence. An antique Priscilla sewing cabinet, oddly fashioned, suggests domesticity. A narrow "day-bed" with its crocheted "pop-corn" spread invites rest, and a set of hanging book shelves above the cot offers, within easy reach, reading material for an idle hour. Pictorial art adds to the interest of this private nook, as an American Currier and Ives color print of Jenny Lind, "Hiawatha's Wedding" and two or three portraits adorn the walls. One portrait is of Charles Lanier when he was four years old. Another feature of special interest is a beautiful corner washstand of rosewood and gray marble with its bowl and pitcher of Old English Staffordshire. A pewter lard-oil lamp, a brass candlestick, a candelabrum, a small graceful chandelier, a metal bouquet holder, a turkey feather fan, and a mahogany rocker and chair complete the furnishings of this attractive little chamber.

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## *The* THIRD FLOOR

Ascending to the third floor, still following the winding stairs, visitors are introduced to another glimpse of the home life of earlier days. A long hall, corresponding to the lower ones already described, is decorated with wall paper of scenic design, representing Mount Vernon and its surroundings. The furnishings consist of two plain settees with chairs to match, along with a few other domestic articles. A round glass lantern hangs at the head of the stairs, lighting the entire floor.

Of the several rooms that open into the hall, two of them are furnished as servants' quarters. These contain plain, substantial furniture, corded beds and splint-bottomed, or corn husk chairs. Another room is utilized as a storeroom where unused wearing apparel and household articles were deposited. Here may be seen an old-fashioned beaver hat. Likewise, there is a woman's scoop bonnet, carefully preserved, and sundry habiliments now quaint and obsolete. There also is a hair covered trunk and a yawning carpet bag, the latter much used by itinerant travelers, as well as other possessions from the overflow of the household.

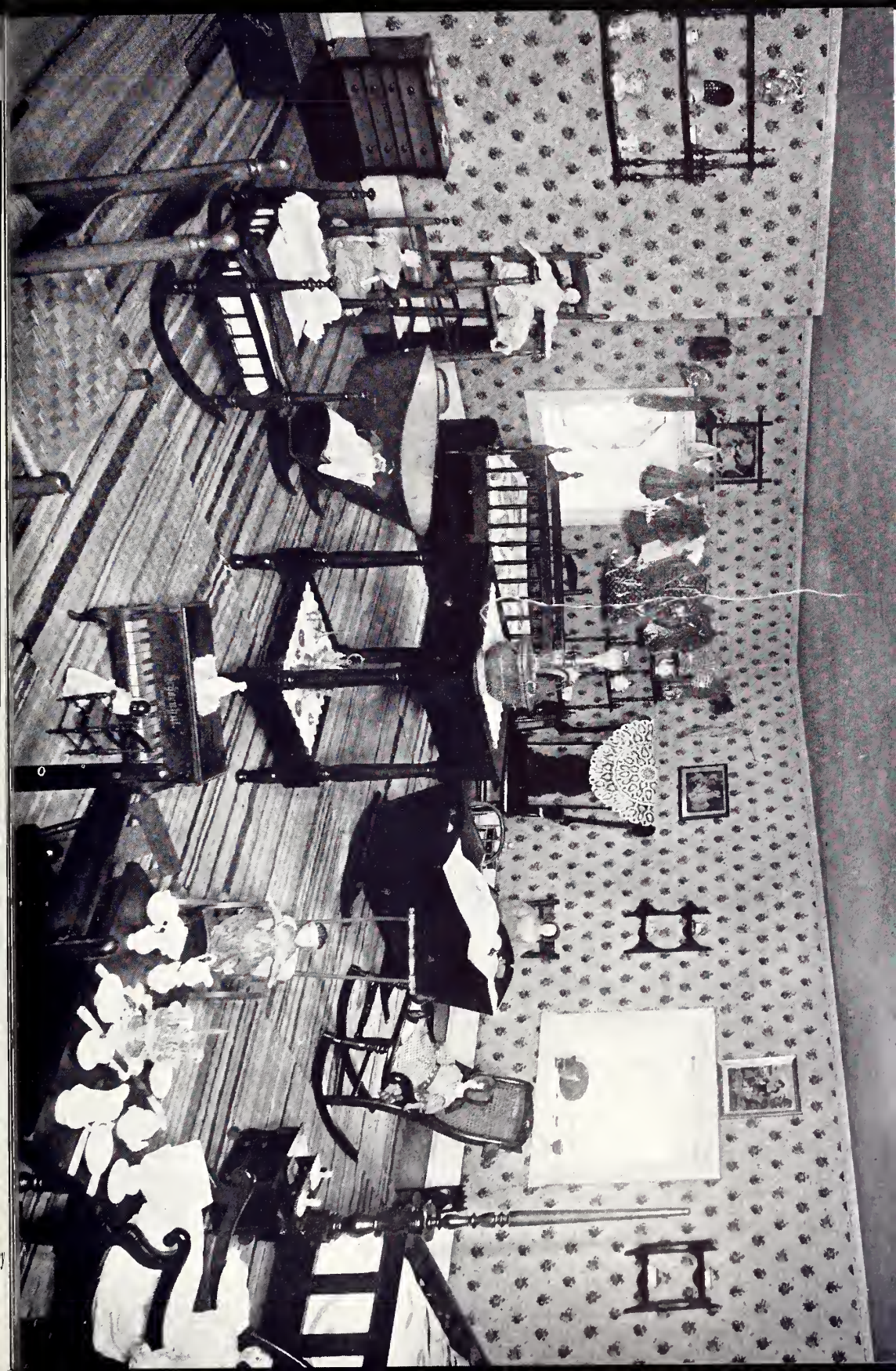
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## *The* NURSERY

The remaining room, a nursery or play-room for the children, always proves to be of unusual interest, especially when visited by children of today. There's a collection of old dolls, large and small, arrayed in fashions very different from those of today. Some of them are from 80 to 100 years old. Their generous wardrobes are displayed on small clothes lines. Other reminders of the children and of their play-world are cribs and cradles of various sizes and styles, doll furniture, and dishes. One rare piece is a trundle bed with detachable posts to accommodate a canopy and its netting and fringe. In addition, a rocking horse, a toy piano, a child's bath-tub and other articles which must have delighted young hearts in those early days, occupy places in the room. The pictures on the walls, appropriate for a nursery in these early days, are Currier and Ives color prints.

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## RESTORATION

It was, of course, impossible to restore all of the original furnishings, but it was possible to follow a pattern of that period, and to restore for all times an excellent example of a remarkable early Hoosier home and its surroundings.

To this end, an extensive search was made for appropriate house furnishings, some articles having been secured from as far south as New Orleans or as far east as New York City.

Many of the furnishings were brought from the eastern home of J. F. D. Lanier, others never left Madison. Still others were given by members of the family and descendents. Furnishings having no direct contact with the Lanier family or household were selected for their period value.

The task of finding, selecting and placing correct furnishings within the home, fell to Miss Drusilla Lanier Cravens, Madison, a granddaughter of J. F. D. Lanier and who, for some 15 years, owned the property. Miss Cravens was, without question, the logical person to undertake the work because of her expert judgment in such matters and because of her natural interest as a member of the family.

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*The*  
**J. F. D. LANIER**  
STATE MEMORIAL

Madison, Indiana



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
DIVISION OF STATE PARKS, LANDS AND WATERS





# The James F. D. Lanier Home

A STATELY mansion, reminiscent of the cultured, leisurely and prosperous eighteen forties and fifties, the Lanier home on the banks of the Ohio River at Madison, is more than an Indiana Memorial to a man whose personal fortune twice aided a young struggling state in times of financial stress.

Nationally known for its architectural beauty and for the authenticity of its furnishings, the Lanier Memorial draws visitors from all parts of the nation, as well as thousands of Hoosiers who pay tribute to a man who stood by the people of his state at a time of great need. It brings the visitor an accurate picture of the setting for family and social life of that generation. Every effort has been made to retain the atmosphere that once surrounded the old home.

Completed in 1844, the building became one of the most pretentious structures in the Middle West. The architect was Francis Costigan.

Since the Lanier Home is essentially a memorial to its former owner, a brief biographical sketch helps to paint the picture of an age for which the home has become a symbol.

James F. D. Lanier was born in Washington, North Carolina, November 22, 1800. He came to Madison when seventeen years old and lived there for more than thirty years, growing up with the thriving young town. After a course in Transylvania College, Lexington, Kentucky, he practiced law in Madison. For some years he served as clerk in the Indiana House of Representatives. By industry, thrift, and business sagacity, he prospered in various lines. In 1834, when the Indiana State Bank was established, he became the first president of the Madison Branch and a member of the Board of Control of the State Banking System. In his fourteen years' relationship with this institution, he made a reputation as one

of the leading financiers of Indiana. That he also laid the foundation of his fortune is evidenced by his building, in 1844, one of the finest and most costly mansions in the West—the present memorial. As it turned out, however, he occupied the home only four years. During these years, his first wife died and one daughter was married. The forties witnessed the dawning of the railroad era with its vast possibilities of development. The Madison banker saw a new field opening which promised most in the great financial center, New York City. At the opening of 1849, he formed a partnership there with Richard H. Winslow, his son-in-law, for the purpose of dealing in railway securities in connection with a general banking business.

Within eight days after the attack on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops, Mr. Lanier from New York offered funds to Governor Oliver P. Morton to finance the equipment of Indiana's regiments. The state was

then struggling under an enormous debt, the treasury was depleted and there was no credit available for arming and equipping the state troops. In this emergency Mr. Lanier, to a large extent, financed Indiana's participation in the war. Adjutant General Terrill, in his official report of the war period, states that the "House of Lanier tendered a loan of \$250,000 without stipulation as to interest or the time when it should be paid." Mr. Lanier's own statement is that the loan was upward of \$400,000.

Some two years later another emergency arose in the affairs of the State. Her enormous debt of long standing was still being carried. To cap other troubles arising from the war, there was violent hostility between the governor and the legislature, and the latter body failed to make appropriations for the state's necessary expenses. The interest on the debt,



*The Back Parlor in the Lanier Home*

in arrears, had to be paid and the public institutions had to be kept open, with no funds to draw upon. Again Governor Morton, using his personal credit, turned to outside sources, and the Winslow-Lanier firm assumed the obligation of paying the interest due the State's creditors. These payments were continued for two years, the whole amount advanced being \$640,000. This makes a total sum of at least \$1,040,000 which is credited to Mr. Lanier.

Mr. Lanier, as has been said, did not long occupy his new home as business interests in the latter part of 1848 took him to New York City, where he became a permanent resident. The Madison home fell to his eldest son, Alexander C. Lanier, who occupied the place until his demise in 1895.

After the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Lanier, the estate descended to other members of the family. Later, Charles Lanier, a son of the original owner, presented it to the Jefferson County Historical Society. That society occupied it as a home until 1925, but its resources were not equal to the upkeep of so large a property. The idea evolved that proper restoration and preservation by the state of this fine mansion would be altogether fitting, and would be, too, a unique feature of the state's rapidly developing conservation scheme. The plan met with complete approval of Miss Drusilla L. Cravens, of Madison, a Lanier granddaughter, to whom the home otherwise would have gone. In 1925 the State of Indiana acquired the property as a memorial which is now under the administration of the Division of State Parks, Lands and Waters of the Conservation Department.

Very little personal data remain of Francis Costigan, the architect. He came from the East, and spent the last twenty years of his life in Indiana. Most of his work was done in Madison and Indianapolis. So far as can be learned, his first building after coming West was the Lanier Home.

This, in part, is the story of J. F. D. Lanier's relation to Indiana, and of those incidents for which he is honored by this memorial. He died in New York City, August 29, 1881, and is buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

The mansion is open to the public daily. Admission price is 25c for adults and 10c for children. More complete details of the home arrangement, furnishings and history may be found in a booklet on sale at the memorial.



See also:

Abraham Lincoln's Contemporaries

James Lanier

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<https://archive.org/details/abrahamlincolnscjllinc>

